

## **Major Field Assessment Plan B. A. Psychology (2008)**

The mission of Southeastern Louisiana University is to meet the educational and cultural needs, primarily of Southeast Louisiana, to disseminate knowledge and to facilitate life-long learning through quality instruction, research and service in a safe, student-centered environment.

The Department of Psychology attempts to foster, among all students, a grasp and appreciation of the scientific method in the study of behavior, and to stimulate interest in the field of Psychology.

### **Goal 1**

To provide students with a foundation in the core concepts and methods of psychology

#### A. Expected Outcome

Students completing the baccalaureate program in Psychology will demonstrate adequate knowledge of core areas of psychology including research methods and statistics, as well as additional topics such as abnormal, developmental, social, cognitive, personality and learning.

#### Assessment

Psychology majors will earn at least a C average in their major courses which include the following required and elective courses

- 1) Required courses (16 hours):
  - a) Introduction to Psychology – PSYC 101 and 102
  - b) Principles of Research Design – PSYC 220
  - c) Psychological Statistics - PSYC 221/222
  - d) Research Design and Analysis - PSYC 335
- 2) Elective Courses (18 hours):
  - a) Developmental Psychology – PSYC 204
  - b) Social Psychology – PSYC 210
  - c) Conditioning and Learning – PSYC 343
  - d) Sensation and Perception – PSYC 346
  - e) Introduction to Clinical Psychology – PSYC 350
  - f) Evolutionary Psychology – PSYC 373
  - g) Personality – PSYC 416
  - h) History and Systems in Psychology – PSYC 421
  - i) Abnormal Psychology – PSYC 422
  - j) Cognitive Psychology – PSYC 440
  - k) Service Learning – PSYC 450
  - l) Physiological Psychology – PSYC 462
  - m) Industrial/ Organizational Psychology – PSYC 475

## B. Expected Outcome

Students will have a positive opinion of the degree to which they have been exposed to a broad body of knowledge in Psychology.

### Assessment

- a. All psychology majors are required to take Psychology 335. During this time they will take the "PSYC 335 Questionnaire" and will rate the Department positively (i.e. above "3.0") in terms of success in exposing them to a broad body of knowledge in Psychology and as this being more important now than when they took their first psychology course.
- b. Based upon the Southeastern Exit Survey, students will have positive scores (i.e. an average score of above "3.0) on this goal (1=Very Dissatisfied, 5=Very Satisfied).
- c. Students taking PSYC 450 (Service Learning in Psychology) will be required to submit a narrative summarizing and evaluating their experience in a human service setting. At least 80% of students will indicate in their narrative that their experience was positive and personally rewarding.
- d. Students are to become aware of the importance of taking cultural background differences into account for a full understanding of human behavior. Textbooks for Psychology content courses (e.g. excluding methods courses such as statistics) incorporate relevant cultural issues in their discussions. Psychology faculty cover such issues as: culture-specific mental disorders, cultural variations in dream content, multicultural considerations in psychotherapy and assessment, cultural differences in the definition of the self, the consequences of being bicultural, cultural differences in parenting and family planning, among others. Assessment will consist of adding relevant questions on the "PSYC 335 Questionnaire". They will rate the Department positively (i.e. above "3.0") in terms of success in exposing them to a global/multicultural perspective in Psychology, and as this being more important now than when they took their first psychology course. In addition, on the Southeastern Exit Survey, students will have positive scores (i.e. an average score of above "3.0) on an item rating the major as promoting sensitivity to individual/cultural differences.

## **Goal 2**

Majors will have a grasp and appreciation of the scientific method in psychology and demonstrate necessary skills to implement and critically evaluate research strategies.

## A. Expected Outcome

Psychology majors will demonstrate the application of the scientific method to an actual research question.

### Assessment

In a required capstone research class (PSYC 335), psychology majors will produce a written manuscript of publishable quality from beginning to end that requires the student to be able to conceptualize the targeted phenomenon into scientific research terms, and generate one or more testable hypotheses. These skills are further developed in the elective course PSYC 449 (Individual Research in Psychology). PSYC 335 and PSYC 449 provide students with critical thinking/statistical skills applicable to a wide variety of academic and non-academic settings and professional activities.

#### B. Expected Outcome

The senior research project resulting from PSYC 335 will demonstrate expertise in the scientific method and ability to synthesize research findings using appropriate APA style.

##### Assessment

In evaluation of manuscripts from 335, 80% of majors will achieve a 5.0 (adequate) or higher. Ratings will be for the following areas/criteria.

- a) APA style
- b) Academic integrity
- c) Ability to utilize library resources necessary to conduct scholarly research in psychology
- d) Synthesis of relevant research literature
- e) Demonstrate understanding of methodology
- f) Accurate statistical analysis and interpretation of results
- g) Comprehensive discussion and integration of results with scientific literature

#### C. Expected Outcome

Psychology majors will feel confident in their abilities to conduct psychological research.

##### Assessment

a. Based on the “PSYC 335 Questionnaire”, at least 80% of those students taking Psychology 335 will rate themselves as being able to demonstrate the following skills with only minimal supervision--collect data, do background research, formulate a set of hypotheses, write up an Introduction section, write up a Methods section, graph data, use statistics, write Results and Discussion sections, and construct a Reference section in proper APA form.

b. Based upon the Southeastern Exit Survey, students will have positive scores (i.e. an average score of above “3.0) on this goal (1=Very Dissatisfied, 5=Very Satisfied).

### **Goal 3**

Students graduating in psychology will be prepared for entrance into graduate school and/or a variety of relevant professions.

A. Expected Outcome

The rate of admittance into graduate schools in the behavioral sciences will compare favorably with other students graduating from a national sample of psychology programs in institutions comparable to Southeastern, and who apply for graduate work in the field. Once in a graduate program, the level of academic performance will compare favorably with other students graduating from institutions comparable to Southeastern.

Assessment

a. On the Southeastern Exit Survey, students will rate the Department positively (i.e. an average score of above 3.0) on the item “How satisfied are you with the degree to which the Psychology Department prepares qualified students for further education in the Behavioral Sciences?” (1=Very Dissatisfied, 5=Very Satisfied).

b. On the Southeastern Exit Survey, at least 25% of graduating Psychology majors will indicate they are accepted in graduate school, or intend to go to graduate school

D. Expected Outcome

Psychology majors will feel that they are prepared to attend graduate school.

Assessment

a. Students taking the “PSYC 335 Questionnaire” will have positive scores (i.e. an average score of above 3.0) on those items in which they rate their current opinion of their degree preparedness, and will rate this goal as being more important now than when they first entered the program.